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A Dramatic Composition



THE FATE
of
MR. BRADY



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BY

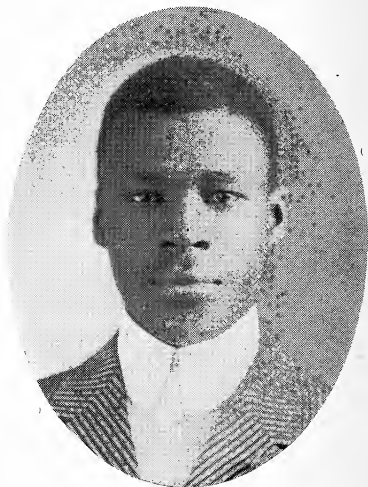
JAMES RICHARD CHASE

BOSTON, MASS.









Yours Sincerely,
JAMES RICHARD CHASE
The Author

THE FATE OF MR. BRADY

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

Plain and brief, not tiresome. It is a joy to
the home. Every page teaches a good
moral. No Library is complete
without this little book.

Read it and be
convinced.



DRAMATIC PERSONAE

MR. BRADY	LAWYER HUNT
MRS. BRADY	MR. HARPER, the Millionaire
MR. BRADY, JR., (their son)	THE COTTON KING
THE MANAGER	THE BOY
STENOGRAPHER & BOOK KEEPER	
THE STRANGER	THE DETECTIVE
POLICE OFFICERS, &c., &c.	

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ACT I.

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*Enter Mrs. Brady.**(Parlor scene here).*

Mrs. Brady—Good evening, dear. Why, I thought he was here! He said that he would return positively at 8 o'clock. It is now 9 o'clock, and he has not yet returned. I wonder what keeps him out until now? Must I sit here all alone until he returns? Oh! here he comes!

Enter Mr. Brady.

Mrs. B.—What kept you so long, dear?

Mr. Brady—Business. The worries of business make one almost frantic sometimes.

Mrs. B.—Has anything gone wrong?

Mr. B.—*Gone wrong?* *(He laughs)*. Why, only six months ago I invested one hundred thousand dollars in a concern that was reputed to be the most reliable and solvent concern in the country, and a few hours ago I was told by the president of it that the whole affair is insolvent.

Mrs. B.—Do not allow that to worry you, dear, for while there is life there is also hope. You have a few thousand dollars left. If you invest it wisely it won't be long ere you retrieve your loss. When you and I were married you had only five thousand dollars to your name. You had just graduated from a business school. You entered the field of commerce with knowledge, only; you had no experience, but fortunately you had a friend who instructed you regarding how to invest and when to invest. You invested, met with success and made two hundred thousand dollars. A few months ago you were the owner of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars in cash. Today, you own only twenty-five thousand dollars. That the loss of one hundred thousand dollars is great, I'll admit, but at the same time you have gained much experience instead. Do not be a poltroon. You cannot always lose. The other fellow has got his. You try and get yours, but in all you do, let honesty be your guide.

Mr. B.—Honesty? *(He laughs)*. A Devil's Hell is

no place for an honest man. Can I successfully regain the one hundred thousand with my fingers mingling in honesty and my heart inclasped in piety? In sin I shall have to dwell. With devils I shall have to associate until I recover my loss.

Mrs. B.—My dear, your discourse is not at all pleasant. It is true that poor investment has almost ruined you; that the thoughts of it are sufficient to drive anyone into deviltry, but you must remember, dear, that we have children that might survive us. Let them at least have the example of a pure and honest life from which they can copy. There is retribution for every evil done. Therefore, if you carry out your intentions you may well expect a harvest of ills.

Mr. B.—Your remonstrances are futile. Do you know how many men, women and children have been made happy at the cost of this, my present bereavement? I swear revenge upon anyone that crosses my path—man, woman, or child.

Mrs. B.—Have you lost the human part of yourself? Are you transformed into a beast? I say again that there is retribution for every evil done. You said that my remonstrances are futile, but futile as they seem now to you, impenetrable as they are to your stone-like heart at this present time, they will appear before you in the form of an apparition when it is too late, and mock your folly. I am your wife, your own dear wife. I wish you happiness, comfort, aye, all the bliss that humanity enjoys, but the inevitability of the destruction which your evil mind is leading you into makes me shiver.

Mr. B. (*He laughs*)—My dear, I leave at 8 o'clock for New York. Tell the boy to pack my trunk and have it sent to the station.

Mrs. B.—How long do you intend to stay in New York?

Mr. B.—Until I make one hundred thousand or more

Mrs. B.—May God bless you.

Mr. B. (He laughs)—There is no blessing for what I am going to do.

Mrs. B.—Then why do you not relinquish the idea?

Mr. B.—Because I can't recover my loss otherwise.

Mrs. B.—You may do whatever your mind dictates, but above all, be just to your fellow man. I am a poor woman. I look to you for everything, but I would rather die than spend one dollar of cursed money. Would I be able to live comfortably on money that I know has been gained through the intentional destruction of humanity? Would I be able to endure the pangs of remorse? Could I have comfort in my waking hours? Would not my sleep be disturbed by hideous nightmares? If you act as you now intend, I see you characterized by posterity as the most cruel, most brutal man that ever walked God's earth.

Mr. B. (rising)—Oh! It is now ten minutes to 8. The train leaves at 8. I must go. Good-bye! You will hear from me soon.

Mrs. B.—You must write to me often. Do not let the fight to retrieve your loss make you forget that you have a wife far away from you who is thinking of you always.

Mr. B.—Fear not, my dear, fear not.

Mrs. B. (Offering her hand)—Good-bye.

They part.

Enter Lawyer Hunt.

Mrs. B (With surprise)—Oh! It pleases me to see you again! Have you been well? I heard that you were away.

Lawyer Hunt—Yes, I went to France about two years ago and have just returned, Mrs. Brady.

Mrs. B.—I presume you had a pleasant time.

Lawyer Hunt—Yes, I had a very pleasant time and more than that, my health is greatly improved.

.. *Mrs. B.*—I think it is improved, for you look much better than when I last saw you. Would you like to live

there?

Lawyer Hunt—I would indeed. I am contemplating going back there to stay.

Mrs. B.—Do you think that France is healthier than America?

Lawyer Hunt—I do not think so, but I know this much, that it means a great deal to me physically. How is Mr. Brady? It is now three years since I saw him.

Mrs. B.—He is well and looks the picture of health. He left an hour ago for New York.

Lawyer Hunt—So you will be alone for awhile?

Mrs. B.—Yes, but the worst of it is that I do not know how long he will be away, or whether I shall see him again alive, or have any comfort with him.

Lawyer Hunt—Is there any grievance between you and him?

Mrs. B.—No, I simply feel uncertain of his safe return.

Lawyer Hunt—Why do you have a foreboding of his unsafe return? Has he gone to New York to engage in something improper?

Mrs. B.—Oh my friend! My friend! from youth! My *only* friend! Can I trust you? Will you keep a secret? Will you promise me faithfully that if I should tell you why Mr. Brady's safe return is doubtful to me you will not mention it to any one?

Lawyer Hunt—I promise you, upon my honor, that I will keep it sacred.

Mrs. B.—Then draw nearer and listen. Mr. Brady invested and lost one hundred thousand dollars. He is determined to retrieve it in any way even at the cost of human lives. I remonstrated but without success. He is gone to New York with no good intentions and what may befall him, only God knows. I am so nervous I do not know what to do. I won't be surprised if I should at any moment receive news that he is within the dreadful walls and iron bars of some prison, or a corpse, the victim of an

avenger. Oh, God! Thou that rulest all things; Thou that possessest power sufficient to conquer the universe and hast ingenuity that is incomprehensible to mankind, who canst make the sea a dry land and the lofty mountains fall; Thou who canst make a mendicant a king and a king a mendicant, and whose mercy is infinite; Thou who makest the moon to shine, the stars to glitter, the thunder to roar, the lightning to flash, the storms to cease, and the sun to hide his face in yonder west, direct my husband's footsteps, lest he rush blindly unto destruction!

Lawyer Hunt—I pray you, compose yourself. That you are troubled, I know, but can you afford to ruin yourself by grieving over one who cares not for himself or you? A change in your features already I can see. Can you not feel the tremor of your frame? Beware lest when you are needed to help your husband, you will be either in an insane asylum or beneath the cold mold.

Mrs. B.—Oh my friend! My friend! You are a lawyer. If misfortune befall Mr. Brady, would you do all in your power to help him?

Lawyer Hunt—I told you not long ago that I intend returning to France to stay, which I am determined to do. My health precedes everything, even friendship, even money.

Mrs. B.—My friend, listen. Are you not anxious to see Mr. Brady ere you return to France?

Lawyer Hunt—Yes, I would be pleased to see him before I return to France, but at the same time I will not stay here longer than I have planned just to see him.

Mrs. B.—Do you regard yourself as a friend to me, a friend in time of bliss, and in time of sorrow?

Lawyer Hunt—I was always a true friend to you and shall always be.

Mrs. B.—Do you know what true friendship calls for?

Lawyer Hunt—Yes, I know what it calls for. It calls for devotion and sacrifice.

Mrs. B.—Then, are you willing to make a sacrifice

for friendship's sake? I am alone. My husband from a home of bliss, from a wife's devotion that was true, from a wife's caresses that were dear, to deviltry has fled. I have no one to speak to, no one to console me when thoughts arise to wreck my life. Oh! How my heart aches when I think of what might befall him.

Lawyer Hunt—My friend, I say to you again, compose yourself. Your husband's intentions are fixed. Do you think you can change them by making yourself miserable? If you could view your folly you would very quickly avert your mind from it. I am a friend to you and freely give you a friend's advice.

Mrs. B.—Why give me what I asked not of you? Do you know my real feelings, my heartaches and grievances? You can only see my outer self. My inner self is hidden from all mankind.

Lawyer Hunt—Would it make you happy if I, instead of returning to France, remain here with you?

Mrs. B.—Yes, it would make me think less of the condition of things and thus give my life less misery.

Lawyer Hunt—Then I promise faithfully to stay with you, but I wish you would control your emotions.

Mrs. B.—How can I? Have you no idea of the relation between a wife and a husband? What brings grief to him, brings grief to me also! I may not constantly be in this state of mind, for when you are in my presence my mind might be diverted, but, at the same time whenever I think of him it will grieve me. Oh! I will give the very best I possess to reform him.

Lawyer Hunt (*He laughs*)—You make me think of something that happened between my father and mother a few years ago. Mother always told father that she would part with anything she possessed to please him. Father once had an engagement to fill in which he had to impersonate a woman. It was necessary for him to wear long hair such as women wear. He did not wish to wear the so-called "rats," so he asked mother if she would part

with her natural hair only to please him. A more cruel look than that which mother gave father I never saw. Father had always believed what mother told him, but from this day in question he became doubtful. He could not understand how mother changed so quickly, for the favor, in his opinion, could have been easily granted. My advice to you is to take things easily. Never do things that you will be sorry for. Never interest yourself in any person to such an extent as to impair your health, and especially if that person fails to appreciate the value of your interest. Always save yourself as much as possible, for by so doing you will be spared to be possibly of use to someone who will appreciate your benevolence. Do not allow your love for him to ruin you.

Mrs. B.—(She laughs).

Lawyer Hunt—I suppose what I said sounds all right, doesn't it?

Mrs. B.—Oh my friend! My friend! Take your eyes from my heart lest you see really that which lies within. You are deceived! You say that I love. Do you know what love is? I say again that my inner self is hidden from all mankind. No one knows now whether I love or not. Only God and I know.

Lawyer Hunt—Did you speak without thinking?

Mrs. B.—Do you think that I am a maniac?

Lawyer Hunt—No, I do not think so.

Mrs. B.—Then why ask such a foolish question as "Did you speak without thinking?"

Lawyer Hunt—Are you not a married woman?

Mrs. B.—Yes, I am.

Lawyer Hunt—Then why say that no one knows now whether you love or not? Do you not love your husband?

Mrs. B.—I pray you, my friend, do not question me thus. That you are a friend of mine, is true, but there is a limitation to our friendship and moreover our friendship does not admit of such personal interrogations. I pray you cease your questioning.

Lawyer Hunt—Are we not true friends?

Mrs. B.—Yes.

Lawyer Hunt—And do you not know what true friendship calls for?

Mrs. B.—Yes, I know what it calls for. It calls for devotion and sacrifice and nothing else. Do you think that because we are friends socially that I am going to—

Lawyer Hunt (with surprise)—Socially? Do you mean socially?

Mrs. B.—Yes, I mean socially. (*She laughs*).

Lawyer Hunt—Then I had the wrong conception of our friendship. I thought it was intimate.

Mrs. B.—Why do you think that social friendship can not be intimate also? Are you through mean, low thoughts converting yourself into a simpleton? Is there any friendship existing that does not play its part in society? Did you feel disappointed in me when I spoke of social friendship? Answer me quickly.

Lawyer Hunt—I cannot answer such a question. I cannot afford it. There is only one answer that I can truthfully give to it. If I give an answer, I will surely forfeit my friendship with you.

Mrs. B.—Forfeit our friendly relations? Why do you cherish such a thought. Did you think ill of me after I spoke of social friendship? I perceived a convulsion of your face immediately after I uttered the words, "social friendship," but I knew not the reason why. Tell me quickly what your thoughts were at that time. If you honor your manhood you will speak the truth. If your friendship is as true as you say it is, you will answer me unhesitatingly and truthfully.

Lawyer Hunt—I pray you, urge me not so eagerly to utter words, though truthful, that might estrange us. I have seen my mistake betime. Please let the matter rest. Think not of it any longer and let our friendship remain as it always has been.

Mrs. B.—Let the matter rest? Why, the more you

refuse me that which I asked you, the more suspicious I become. What in the name of God could you have thought of that makes you so timid to utter it? Will you promise faithfully to tell me all if I promise you that I will forgive you and that we will remain friends as we always were.

Lawyer Hunt—Yes.

Mrs. B.—Then tell me what your thoughts were.

Lawyer Hunt—Oh! I can't! I can't! My tongue refuses to move to utter it.

Mrs. B. (rising)—Tell me quickly or our friendship shall henceforth cease.

Lawyer Hunt (Throwing up hands deprecatingly)—I pray you give me a few minutes more and I will tell it.

Lawyer Hunt retires.

Enter Stranger.

Stranger—Are you Mrs. Brady?

Mrs. B.—Yes.

Stranger—I arrived here from Chicago about an hour ago and would have come to your house ere this, but I had much difficulty in locating it. (*Handing her a letter*). I presume you know the handwriting?

Mrs. B.—Yes, it is my son's. Did you leave him in good health?

Stranger—Not very good.

Mrs. B.—Did you meet his brother?

Stranger—Why no. He never even spoke of him.

Mrs. B.—How long have you been acquainted with my son?

Stranger—About six months.

Mrs. B.—I will give anything to see my two sons now!

Stranger—It might do you some good to see the one whom I have not met, but not the one I have met, for it would grieve you.

Mrs. B. (In astonishment)—Why do you speak thus? What do you mean to imply when you say that the presence of my son will grieve me? Tell me quickly. Oh, I pray you tell me truthfully all about my son. Do not be

timid to tell it, for nothing will be too disgraceful to me for you to mention about him if it is the truth. I wish to hear the truth. Oh, I desire to know all about what has befallen my boy. Four years ago he left his home and mother's tender care for Chicago, for it has always been his desire to go there and establish himself in commerce. He kept up a correspondence with me for three years and then ceased it. It is fully a year now since he wrote to me. I do not know why he does not write. I will give anything to see him.

Stranger—Did he not say anything about his present condition in the letter?

Mrs. B.—No. In it he simply introduced you and said that I would see him soon, and that when you reached here he would be on his way to Canada.

Stranger—It is strange he did not mention that to me! His actions sometimes make me think that he is insane. To tell you the truth, Mrs. Brady, I think your son's conscience is whipping him about something, for he seems worried all the time. He and I on sundry occasions have attended social gatherings, and his gestures on each occasion were such as to attract unnecessary attention.

Mrs. B.—Tell me, I pray you, how does he act? Like a frightened person?

Stranger—Yes, he acts very much like one. I remember that we were once at a party. Some of the individuals composing the party were very intelligent. There was a Professor Shay with us who was enlightening us on a subject of great importance. Every person present was very attentive, but suddenly your son averted his head and placed his hands over his eyes as if to keep out something hideous. I watched him closely from that time and have always found him to act similarly. There is no doubt, Mrs. Brady, that your son has committed some crime, or done something that he is really sorry for.

Mrs. B.—I wonder what it could be that he has done? Since he grew up he has been very honest, very upright.

He believed always in doing the right thing. He has always been a despiser of bad company, tobacco and whiskey. He would have rather thrown himself into Niagara Falls than crossed the threshold of a gambling den or a house of prostitution. Have you ever seen him indulging in or have you ever learnt that he indulged in any of the habits I have just mentioned?

Stranger—I have always known him to be the man you said he was. I am quite certain that none of the habits which you mentioned had anything to do with the changing of him. But something has changed him. Something has happened to him that might ruin him for life. When he comes you will hear it all. He sent and told you that he would be here soon. That you can depend upon, for he is very punctual.

Mrs. B. (aside, soliloquizingly)—Troubles seem to shower down upon me like rain upon a desert plain. Like the dark clouds which precede a rainfall darken the firmament, so do my troubles kill my hopes of future happiness.

Enter Lawyer Hunt.

Mrs. Brady introduces Lawyer Hunt to Stranger.

Stranger retires.

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Mrs. B. to Lawyer Hunt—You seem much worried! Have you not composed yourself sufficiently to be able to tell me that which I asked of you? In whose shoes art thou standing? A woman's or a man's? What is it that makes you so dreadfully timid? There, go look in that mirror and beholding your face tell me if you are not ashamed of it. Oh coward, flee from my presence. A coward such as you are never before lived.

Lawyer Hunt—Oh, I pray you—

Mrs. B. (rising)—Flee from my presence! Further explanation is unnecessary. If you have not sufficient courage to move yourself, remain where you are.

Lawyer Hunt distracted, retires.

Mrs. Brady resumes seat and reclines.

Mrs. Brady's son enters with outstretched arms.

Son—Oh mother! Mother!

Mrs. B.—My son! My son! (*Pressing son close to her bosom and kissing*) My boy! Your presence has brought to me momentary bliss.

Son—Why momentary?

Mrs. B.—Because it is. I begin to grieve now, for you are so completely changed in your appearance. Are you suffering with the ravages of a disease? There, your cheek bones are fighting their way through the skin, your eyes sinking, and your whole frame a physical wreck. Tell me the reason of all this. Is it sickness?

Son—No, I just can't eat as I should. I have eaten only five times in the last three weeks.

Mrs. B.—Why do you starve yourself? Have you committed a crime that makes you so miserable that you cannot eat? Oh, my boy! My boy! Tell me of your troubles and I will do all I can to help you.

Son—You cannot help me, mother, for it is now too late! I have but very little time, so listen to my story. I have ruined father and you also. Since I left home for Chicago I have been very successful in business. I worked out one of the cleverest money-making propositions in Chicago a few weeks ago for a friend and he made one hundred thousand dollars, but it was to my sorrow, for shortly afterwards I learnt that father was the victim. Oh! I could not rest from that time. I could not eat as I should. I was obnoxious to the tastes of my friends, for my soul was so haunted, as it is now, that I forgot all about propriety. Now and then I would see father before my mind's eyes, a wreck, and you also. I could not undergo the pangs which remorse brought me and so I grieved myself to this, and this is my last. When you see father tell him that I am gone before to make clear the

way for him. Good-bye, mother.

Mrs. Brady kisses him and he falls dead to the floor.

Mrs B. (frantically)—Oh, my son! My son! Return! Return!

Curtain.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

(Office scene here).

Mr. Brady in his office.

Enter Mr. Harper, the millionaire.

Millionaire—Good afternoon, my friend.

Mr. B (bowing)—Good afternoon, Mr Harper. Will you take a seat?

Millionaire—Very well, my friend.

Mr. B.—I presume that you have come to settle that little favor I asked you a few days ago to grant me, eh?

Millionaire—Yes, and I am quite willing to grant you it. (The loan of \$150,000) providing you promise me faithfully, upon your word of honor that you will return it as early as possible.

Mrs. B.—My friend, I promise you upon my word of honor that I will return the amount at an early date. Do you wish security for it?

Millionaire—My friend, your word is sufficient security. I know you too well to take security. Since I have known you, you have been upright, honest and benevolent. You only can change the confidence I have in you. (*Handing him a check*). Here is the \$150,000 you asked me for.

Mr. B.—How much percentage do you wish on this loan?

Millionaire—My friend, I have lent you \$150,000 on friendly terms, not on business terms. When you are ready to return the amount, return that only.

Mr. B.—If there should be necessity for it at any time in the far or near future, I would do as much for you as you have done for me, if I be able to do it. A friend such as you are is not easily found in these days. My parents have never done more for me.

Millionaire—I must leave you now, my friend, for I

have some things of great importance to attend to.

Mr. B.—Do you need any assistance? If you do, I will very gladly give a helping hand.

Millionaire—I appreciate your offer very highly, but the things I am going to attend to are strictly private. Good-bye.

Millionaire retires.

Mr. B. (looking at his watch)—My employes are late this morning! Oh, here they come!

Enter Manager, Stenographer and Bookkeeper.

Mr. B. (turning to Manager)—I wish to speak to you.

Manager—Very well, sir.

Stenographer and Book-keeper busy.

Mr. B. (to manager)—I succeeded in getting a loan of \$150,000 from my friend, the millionaire.

Manager—Very good! So we can start things a-going, eh?

Mr. B.—Yes, but we have to think before we start, nay, will have to employ economy to make the affair a success. I have sufficient money to use 'tis true, but the money is not mine, it is borrowed money. I promised faithfully to return it as early as possible. If I am unable to do so, I might commit suicide.

Manager—Commit Suicide?

Mr. B. (with a determined look)—Yes.

Manager—Oh, nonsense. If you feel that way, relinquish the idea of doing business. When a man starts out in business, these two things confront him: failure and success. But no sensible man thinks of the former. It should not be given a thought, for thinking of it is apt to blight one's hope of the latter and when one loses hope everything else is lost. Every man can fail very easily if he wishes to for it is the easiest thing to do. He does not have to exert himself or bring into play the best there is in him to bring about failure. All he needs to do is to bid the business good-bye and failure is his. But success requires more than that, for to succeed in anything one

must first realize that there is something of great value in the thing desired. I am speaking from experience. I know of several persons who started business with three times as much money as you are going to start with and it was all borrowed money, but they never showed any sign of timidity. Do not be a coward. It does not become you.

Mr. B.—I am far from being a poltroon. I said that I would commit suicide if I fail, because I know that life won't be anything to me, if I should, in consequence of my failure, rob a friend financially, who has been so kind as to lend me \$150,000 without security, even without charge of interest, only because he regards me as a true and honest friend and desired to help me. A friend more sincere does not live.

Manager—If you should fail, your friend, if a friend he be, would stand by you. Only then would you realize whether or not his friendship is sincere. Should he, after having learnt of your failure, instead of sympathizing with you and sharing the misfortune with you insist on having you pay the sum, though knowing that it has been blown to the winds, then he is not a friend, but an enemy.

Mr. B.—To expect him to share with me such a loss would be an imposition on friendship's benevolence. I would rather die than live and face the fact that I am unable to pay my debts. I could not endure it.

Manager—We are wasting too much time on this subject. We should, instead, discuss plans of operation.

Mr. B.—I am grateful to you for having called my attention to that fact for we have three important questions to settle, viz.: suitability of climate, proximity to railroad station, and cheap labor. The State of Georgia is the best place in the country for growing cotton and the plantation I am going to purchase is in Georgia, in close proximity to the railroad station, but cheap labor I am uncertain of, and without it we cannot do anything. We must pay the people less than they deserve. You must go to Georgia and make the necessary arrangements.

Manager—Sir, ere I leave, may I give my opinion of cheap labor?

Mr. B.—Yes, the pleasure is yours.

Manager—Sir, I do not agree with you on the question of cheap labor for it is something that will eventually ruin any business. In my opinion, employes should be made to feel that they are as much concerned in the business as the employer and the only way by which such a feeling will become common among employes will be by giving them to understand that they will share in the profits of the business. When you accomplish that you will have accomplished all that the success of your business depends upon.

Mr. B.—Go you then and arrange things to suit yourself.

Manager retires.

Mr. B. (to Stenographer)—I expect a gentleman (the cotton king) presently, have him wait until I return.

Stenographer—Very well, sir.

Mr. Brady retires.

The Cotton King enters.

Cotton King—Good morning.

Stenographer—Good morning, sir. Have you come to see Mr. Brady?

Cotton King—Yes.

Stenographer—He will be here in a few minutes, sir. Will you wait for him?

Cotton King—Yes.

Stenographer—May I rest your coat and hat, sir?

Cotton King—You may, for it will be great relief to me.

Stenographer takes coat and hat and Cotton King takes a seat. Stenographer resumes her seat. ..

Mr. Brady enters.

Mr. B.—Good morning, my friend. Have you been waiting very long?

Cotton King—No, I just came in.

Mr. B. (Advancing to his desk)—Come this way, please.

Cotton King follows. ..

Mr. B. (Offering Cotton King a seat)—Did you receive a letter from me yesterday?

Cotton King—Yes.

Mr. B.—Well, what have you to say about it? Are you willing to sell me that cotton plantation? I am offering you seventy-five thousand dollars for it. ..

Cotton King (with surprise)—Seventy-five thousand dollars? (*He laughs*). No one could purchase my plantation for that amount! I will not sell for less than one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. If you have any idea of the fortune you will be able to make on cotton three months hence, you will not hesitate in purchasing, nor will you think that my figure is too high. I have a crop now that I expect to reap inside of two months and which by estimation will bring a clear profit of one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars were I to sell it at the present price of cotton. If I were not going to Europe, I would not sell for one hundred and eighty thousand dollars for it is expected that the price of cotton will increase thirty per cent three months hence. Here is the report on it from an expert on cotton trading. This expert is the cleverest cotton dealer in Chicago. My friend, the advantage you will have is this, only a few dealers are acquainted with the prospect of the sudden increase in the price of cotton. You can do just what they intend doing: buy all the cotton you can get now instead of making arrangements to sell, or selling any of what you will reap ere long, so that when its price goes up, you will be in a position to make a fortune. It is impossible for you to fail.

Mr. B.—Is this account from a good source?

Cotton King (handing a sheet to Mr. Brady)—Read this and you will learn the reason why the price of cotton is going to increase.

Mr. B. having read the convincing account concludes to buy.

Mr. B.—How much did you say you would sell for?

Cotton King—One hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

Mr. B.—Here is the full amount, one hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

Cotton King turns over all the necessary papers to Mr. B. and retires.

Enter Manager.

Mr. B. (to Manager)—Well, I have purchased the cotton plantation for one hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

Manager (with surprise)—One hundred and twenty thousand dollars? Why, I thought you said that you were going to purchase for seventy-five thousand dollars.

Mr. B.—He would not sell for less than one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. The price is very high, I'll admit that; but he has shown me how I could make a fortune on the investment. He said that if he were not going to Europe to stay he would not have sold at that price, for the price of cotton is going to increase 30 per cent. He also told me that only a few individuals are acquainted with this fact, and that they are going to purchase all the cotton they can get instead of selling so that when its price goes up they will be in position to sell and make a fortune.

Manager—Is there any truth in that report?

Mr. B.—It came from a good source, from the shrewdest cotton dealer in Chicago.

Manager—If the rumor be true, it is a good investment.

Mr. B.—Oh, it is true for I read the account myself and in it one can plainly see why the price of cotton will increase. There is no doubt that I am going to succeed.

Manager—I wish you success, but I am doubtful. Those Chicago business men are always working out

money-making schemes and they are so clever with them that they always succeed. I hope that you are not their victim this time.

Mr. B. (he laughs)—Have you succeeded in getting laborers?

Manager—Yes, sir. I got seventy-five men and forty women. The men want \$1.50 per day and the women want \$1.00 per day.

Mr. B.—Here's fifteen thousand dollars for the carrying on of the affair. Use it to the best advantage, taking all precautions against unnecessary expenses. A crop is expected seven weeks hence, and the few dollars I have must keep things agoing until then. A train leaves here for Georgia in fifteen minutes. Take that train. It arrives in Georgia at eight o'clock tomorrow morning and by eight-thirty you can reach the plantation. You will then have sufficient time to make arrangements for the ensuing day. We have no time to waste now. We must be up and doing for every minute, every second, means something to the business. An hour's neglect might produce the loss of a few thousand dollars, so try and catch that train.

Manager retires.

(Nine weeks have passed).

Mr. B. at his desk writing.

Mrs. B. enters.

Mr. B.—Oh! I am so glad to see you! I was just writing to you!

Mrs. B. silent. . .

Mr. B.—Why are you so pensive? Are you worried?

Mrs. B.—Worried? I thought by this I would have been a corpse.

Mr. B.—Why, are you suffering physically?

Mrs. B. remains silent.

Mr. B.—You make me uneasy! Can you not tell me of your suffering, whether it be physical, mental, or both combined? Have I not been writing to you often? Have

I not been sending regularly to you sufficient support? Tell me of your trouble, I pray you tell me.

Mrs. B.—It is yours as well as mine.

Mr. B.—Then why hesitate in telling me?

Mrs. B.—Because I fear that you might collapse.

Mr. B. (laughing)—Collapse, if the loss of one hundred thousand dollars did not cause me to collapse, what can?

Mrs. B.—Do you value money more than your family?

Mr. B. (smiling)—Is my family anything to me without money? I'd rather be a corpse than a living pauper. With me, 'tis money first, and family afterwards.

Mrs. B.—Are you speaking with a madman's tongue?

Mr. B. (he laughs).

Mrs. B.—You may laugh at what I say now, but the time is drawing nigh when you will wish that you had never spoken thus. Since you prefer money to your family and since it is money that has brought you here, I'll no longer hesitate in telling you of my trouble in which you are also concerned. Your son is dead, the elder one.

Mr. B. (frantic)—Oh, My God! My God! What is this that has come upon me?

Mrs. B. (sternly)—Play not the part of a hypocrite. Five minutes have not elapsed since you said that you cared more for money than you did for your family, and now, are you collapsing over this news? Did you not say a few minutes ago that if the loss of one hundred thousand dollars did not cause you to collapse that nothing could? Are your cries to God of sorrow or are they of joy? If you are a man, act like a man. If you shed tears sufficient to drown the universe I will not believe it is because your son is dead.

Mr. B.—Will you not pardon me for what I have said? Will you not forgive me the wrong I have done you?

Mrs. B.—You have not wronged me. It is your own self that you have wronged, and you will feel it ere long.

Mrs. B. retires.

Mr. B. in contemplation.

Manager enters.

Manager to Mr. B.—You look restless, sir. Have you had any unpleasant news?

Mr. B.—Yes, my son is dead.

Manager—Have you not heard anything else?

Mr. B.—No.

Manager—Why, your business has failed.

Mr. B.—Failed?

Manager—Yes, sir, for the cotton we have reaped is less than one-fourth of the amount of your estimate, and that report you got from Chicago about the price of cotton increasing thirty per cent is true, but we can't get any cotton to purchase. The whole plantation as it now stands is worth less than one-half of what you paid for it. I see nothing in the near future, or the present, but failure.

Mr. B.—Failure? And did you spend all I gave you?

Manager—Yes, sir, and had I not been economical, you would have been obliged to send me a few dollars more for the amount I had to pay to laborers weekly was \$915. I had seventy-five men at \$1.50 a day and forty women at \$1.00 a day. I spent three thousand dollars for fertilization, the necessary repairs to the factory cost three thousand two hundred dollars and I suppose you know what my pay was. We had fully nine weeks of work so you can figure the whole thing out. You gave me fifteen thousand dollars.

Mr. B. silent.

Manager slowly retires.

After an interim of 15 minutes, Millionaire enters.

Millionaire—Good afternoon, my friend.

Mr. B. (bowing)—Good afternoon, my lord. (*a jest*).

Millionaire—I heard that you have failed; is it true?

Mr. B.—Yes, I have robbed you financially.

Millionaire (with surprise)—Robbed me financially? Why, are you not ready to pay me the one hundred and

fifty thousand dollars which I lent you?

Mr. B.—I am willing to pay you, my friend.

Millionaire—My friend, I want to know if you are ready?

Mr. B. remains silent.

Millionaire—Have you the one hundred and fifty thousand dollars ready?

Mr. B.—Too stern, my friend, too stern. I cannot answer you.

Millionaire—Can you not answer a simple question?

Mr. B.—To you, my friend, such a question might be simple, but to me it is not.

Millionaire—There are only two answers to my question. Yes or no. Tell me I pray you if that be not true.

Mr. B.—Very true, my friend, very true.

Millionaire—And can you not say either? Tell me if your answer be the former or the latter?

Mr. B.—My friend, the latter is my answer.

Millionaire—Ah, my friend, then you are a scoundrelly person, eh? I never would have believed it of you.

Mr. B.—You are wrong, my friend; I am neither scoundrelly nor a scoundrelly person, nor a scoundrel. I am an honorable, upright man.

Millionaire (derisively)—If you're honest, prove it then.

Mr. B.—I will, my friend, if you will give me sufficient time.

Millionaire—But suppose time fail in enabling you to prove your honesty, then what will you do?

Mr. B.—I would put myself on your mercy.

Millionaire (he smiles)—Are you a poltroon?

Mr. B.—A coward? Do you see any mark of cowardice on me?

Millionaire—Did you not speak of mercy?

Mr. B.—Yes.

Millionaire—And is not that a coward's thought?

Mr. B. remains silent.

Millionaire—Ah, my friend, if anyone had told me this of you, I would not have believed it. You are a coward from the crown of your head to the sole of your feet. You have not courage enough to make effort to save your own self from ignominy.

Mr. B.—Ignominy? What do you mean by that remark?

Millionaire—If you do not comprehend now, you will later.

Mr. B.—Can you not explain yourself more plainly?

Millionaire—I have spoken plainly enough.

Mr. B.—You say that you have spoken plainly enough, but you have not. You are a liar!

Millionaire—Pray, do not enrage me for you might suffer the consequences.

Mr. B.—Do you think that I dread suffering?

Millionaire—The thoughts of it may not frighten you, but when it lays its hands upon you, you will wish that you had never been born.

Mr. B.—Are you a friend who speaks?

Millionaire—'Tis a friend who speaks?

Mr. B. (*scornfully*)—No, not a friend. An enemy.

Millionaire—Enemy? Tell me where on God's earth can you find an enemy who will do as much as I did for you? Answer me quickly.

Mr. B.—I found one months ago.

Millionaire—Go, bring him before me so I may observe him closely.

Mr. B. (*smiling*)—He is here now!

Millionaire—Where?

Mr. B. (*pointing to a mirror*)—Go look into that mirror against the wall and you will see him.

Millionaire (*angrily*)—Is it I to whom you have reference? Do you call me an enemy?

Mr. B.—Did you you not wish me evil? Is that a friend's wish? Did you not threaten me that you would make me suffer so I would wish I had never been born?

Millionaire—I said it because I was angry.

Mr. B.—Angry?

Mr. B. (he laughs).

Millionaire—Were you never angry?

Mr. B.—Yes, but I always exercised my anger on my enemies and not on my friends. He who wishes one evil, does not wish it because he is angry, but because he hates one. You should love your friends as you love yourself. Were you ever made so angry that you wished yourself evil? No, is your answer. You cannot swear yes. By all the gods in heaven and demons in hell you cannot. Ah, now is the time to prove that anger sometimes makes persons wrong their friends and even do things unconsciously. That you are angry now, I know. There, your blood is fighting its way through the face, your eyes are like a hungry tiger's in search of prey, and your brow's contracted. If anger made you unconsciously wish me evil let it make you unconsciously wish me well by giving me an extension of time to pay my debt.

Millionaire—You have not the right conception of anger. Do you think that it is something that comes through earnest invocation? No, it is like a harmless little spark which, when kindled into a flame or action, becomes a conflagration and seeks to destroy everything within its reach. It aims not at a particular thing, but at everything. I am not angry now. I am pleased. If I become angry, you might suffer by it. I might do you an injury.

Mr. B.—My friend, will you not give me sufficient time to liquidate the debt?

Millionaire—There is nothing else for me to do but to give you the time to pay it, but can you not give me one hundred thousand dollars of it now? I will wait for the balance.

Mr. B.—Meet me here tomorrow. I will then be able to give you a definite answer. At least, I think I will be able to give you what you asked for.

.. *Millionaire assents and retires.*

Mrs. B. enters.

Mr. B. approaches Mrs. B., throws his hands around her shoulders and kisses her.

Mrs. B. remains silent.

Mr. B.—I am very glad to see you I was wishing that you might come to see me. Have you been well?

Mrs. B.—No, my mind is troubled. I am tired of life.

Mr. B.—What has happened? Are you suffering with a malady that you cannot overcome?

Mrs. B.—Not with a malady, but with thoughts of the fact that in all humanity one cannot find a true friend.

Mr. B.—Have you not a friend on whom you can depend? Am I more fortunate than you in that respect? I have a friend who has been everything a friend could be although his actions are at present apparently those of an enemy.

Mrs. B.—Who is that friend?

Mr. B.—Harper, the millionaire.

Mrs. B.—The millionaire? Ah, my dear, you are blindfolded. You cannot see the weapon which your friend carries in his hands. Since you are my husband, I will not hesitate to make clear to you the cause of your failure in your investment in cotton. I know it all, but before I tell you, I wish you to answer this question. Will you believe that your friend, the millionaire is the whole cause of your failure?

Mr. B.—I am willing to believe any tangible information regarding the matter and especially if it comes through you as I would not doubt your veracity.

Mrs. B.—Well, listen. Your friend, the millionaire, having learnt of the big crop that you were expecting and of your intention to keep all the cotton you can get until its price increased and then sell and make a fortune, spent quite a few thousand dollars in paying expert agriculturists that were in disguise as laborers on your plantations, to destroy the fertilization of the plants and in consequence

of which a blight was brought upon the whole crop. He also fixed things so that you were unable to get any cotton to purchase. He did this all just because he wishes to come into possession of the plantation. When he heard it was for sale, you had already bought it and knowing just how you were situated financially, he planned to ruin you. Ah, that is the man whom you call a friend. That is the man who is dragging you into indigence, into ignominy. Oh, God, deliver me from such a friend.

Mr. B.—Tell me, where did you get this news?

Mrs. B.—I heard it on the train. I was sitting behind him and heard him word after word as he told the story to a friend, a Mr. Brown.

Mr. B.—I shall settle this with him when he comes. I expect him soon. (*Listening*). I hear a footstep now. I think that is he. Go hide yourself in that room (*pointing to it*) until I settle with him.

Mrs. B. retires to room.

Millionaire enters.

Millionaire—Well, my friend, I am on the spot.

Mr. B.—Yes, and a very holy spot.

Millionaire—Well, I suppose you know what has brought me here today?

Mr. B. (he laughs)—Do you know what has brought you here today?

Millionaire—Yes, the hundred thousand dollars which you promised to pay.

Mr. B.—My friend, I have more than that for you.

Millionaire—All the better (*rubbing the palms of his hands*).

Mr. B.—We have quite a settlement to make. Have we not?

Millionaire—Yes.

Mr. B.—Well, we will make it now. But before we make it, answer me this question. Why did you close the doors of the sale of cotton against me and destroy the fertility of my cotton plants?

Millionaire (with surprise)—Why do you think I did that to you?

Mr. B.—I do not think so. I know so. Were you not on the train a few days ago with your friend, Mr. Brown?

Millionaire—Yes

Mr. B.—Well, I was sitting behind you and heard you word after word as you told the story to Mr. Brown. I was so hurt that I felt like blowing your head off, but I thought it best to wait until we were alone for I desire God only to witness this settlement between us. Oh God! Give me the power to deal with this scoundrel according to his deeds. Give me the power, I pray Thee, give me the power.

Millionaire—Ah, my friend, you seem to ignore all I have done for you in the way of kindness.

Mr. B.—Your kindness was merely an intrigue of yours. With the veil of kindness thrown over my eyes, you led me blindly into this. With an insidious hand covered with friendship's glove, you led me into this place in life, and now you urge my precipitation. Must I fall and leave you in wealth's loftiness, looking down upon me in indigence and ignominy? No, my friend, it will not be so for before I fall, your corpse I shall look upon. You shall not escape me. Your life is mine. You cannot redeem yourself. You shall pay the price.

Millionaire is silent.

Mr. B.—Treacherous wretch, prepare to meet thy God!

Mr. B. shoots at the millionaire piercing his heart with a bullet. The millionaire falls dead to the floor

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

(Office scene here).

Mr. B. standing over the dead body of the millionaire with a revolver in his hand.

Mrs. B. enters.

Mrs. B. (frightened)—Oh, my God, my God, you have killed him! You have killed him! You have now completely wrecked yourself. You have brought an indelible stigma upon your family. Oh, my dearest son! When I looked upon your corpse not long ago, my heart pained me. I saw nothing around me that could suffice for consolation. I wept, I mourned. I saw at that time only the painful and worse side of my loss, but today, my son, I see the soothing and better side of it. I am now lost in reverie over the fact that you are not here to undergo the pangs of the stigma which your father's wrecklessness has brought upon his family. I thank God that you are where you can not feel. Sleep on, my son, sleep on. (*Turning to Mr. B.*) Be silent. I think I hear a footstep. Who can it be? An officer of the law? Yes, it is an officer. He is coming to investigate. Go hide yourself lest the guilt which your face carries upon it expose you to detection. Be quick! Be quick!

Mr. B. retires.

Detective enters.

Detective (showing badge)—Are you Mrs. Brady?

Mrs. B.—Yes.

Detective—Does Mr. Brady live here?

Mrs. B.—Yes, whenever he is in the city.

Detective—Has he been here lately?

Mrs. B.—Oh, not long ago.

Detective—Do you know whether or not he is acquainted with the millionaire banker, Mr. Harper?

Mrs. B.—I do not.

Detective—It is rumored that they were together a few days ago. Is such a rumor true?

Mrs. B.—Well, I think I saw them together a few days ago, if I did not take some other gentleman for Mr. Harper.

Detective—Have you ever heard Mr. Brady speaking of or were you ever told by him that a millionaire whose name is Harper, financially helped him in securing a cotton plantation?

Mrs. B.—Mr. Brady told me of the kindness of a millionaire friend who lent him \$150,000, but he never mentioned his name. I am quite sure, however, that the Mr. Harper of whom you ask is the man.

Detective—Do you know where Mr. Brady could be found now? The police are in search of him.

Mrs. B.—In search of him? Why, what has he done?

Detective—Mr. Harper was found dead in Mr. Brady's office a few days ago with a bullet in his heart. Several persons have given evidence that they saw Mr. Harper enter the office on the day in question.

Mrs. B.—So you are looking for Mr. Brady because you assume that he is the murderer?

Detective—I have not assumed anything. I am simply investigating. It is no more than right that investigation be made of anyone who is found dead as Mr. Harper was found or otherwise. The testimonies which have been given publicly in the case are such that the public's belief is that Mr. Brady is the murderer. It is therefore up to us as officers of the law to investigate and find out the right of things. If it be proven that Mr. Brady is guilty, or not guilty, the law would then take its course, and the general public would be satisfied. Until then, there will be a conflict of opinion. I am sorry to say this Mrs. Brady, but I think Mr. Brady will be indicted for the murder, for it is too apparent for him to escape. I also think Mrs. Brady, that you know of Mr. Brady's

whereabouts, and advise you to give me information regarding it. If you do that it will mean a great deal to him in the trial. The more trouble he gives the police, the harder he makes things for himself.

Mrs. B.—Mr. Brady disappeared very strangely a few days ago. I was out visiting when he left. He left a note for me in which he informed me of the fact that he was called away hurriedly, and that he could not wait to inform me personally of it. Knowing that it might be on business, and that business men sometimes receive such calls, I accredited the whole matter to what he said. I never thought that anything of this kind had happened. You may think that I am saying this because Mr. Brady is so closely connected to me, but believe me, my dear gentleman, I never thought that anything of this nature had happened. I am so nervous over this news that I do not know what to do or say, and especially when I think of the fact that the public is watching him. The millionaire was a very kind man to Mr. Brady, so kind that I will not believe that Mr. Brady murdered him unless he confesses to it. The nature of this case is not at all strange to me. The evidence is purely circumstantial. I have on sundry occasions witnessed the conviction and sentencing of persons to the chair on circumstantial evidence. As time rolled on, proofs came up that those persons were innocent, but what could the courts do? What could the public do? That public which the arbiters of the courts and officers of the law are always eager to satisfy. Ere those convicted ones were unjustly laid away in senseless dust, they plead for clemency, for justice in their innocence, but the eager desire of arbiters to adhere to public opinion, made them too dull of comprehension in the line of justice. If I were in a jury or on the bench, I would not convict a man on circumstantial evidence. If direct evidence could not be given, I would declare the indicted innocent. All the sages of the universe could not convince me of the guilt of anyone on circumstantial evi-

dence. You may be seeking an innocent man now to imprison him. You can't doubt it. You may be the murderer of the millionaire. One of them who gave evidence may be the guilty one. I dare you to deny it. To deny it you must have seen the murder at the time it was committed.

Detective—Do you not think that there is reason for Mr. Brady's strange disappearance? If he were here to defend his name, the public might be convinced by this that he is innocent, notwithstanding that appearances are against him. No one knows where he can be found. You are his wife and even you are unable to give proper information regarding where he can be located. All these things make the general public more suspicious of him. You can't blame us for investigating. You can't blame the public for accusing him for his very disappearance immediately after the murder makes it apparent that he is guilty. That he was with the millionaire on the day in question has been proven. We need him, not because we desire to indict him, but because he might be able to give us better evidence in the case than we have already gotten. The police need him and they are going to get him before long.

Detective retires.

Mr. B. enters.

Mrs. B. to Mr. B.—Be silent. I did not hear the closing of the door. The detective is not yet gone. He might be listening for what he thinks might ensue. I'll go to see if he be gone.

Mrs. B. retires.

Mr. B. in deep meditation.

Mrs. B. enters.

Mrs. B.—He is gone! Everything is clear.

Mr. B.—Clear? I cannot see it. I dare not leave this house. I listened to the interview the detective had with you and heard him very distinctly when he said that public opinion was antagonistic to me. I am known throughout

the city. I cannot go up or down or traverse a street without being seen by someone who knows me. If I do not escape from this city, I will be captured. But how can I escape when I dare not enter the street, a car, a train, a carriage, or any conveyance unobservedly. If an airship were to come here to take me away, I would be seen upon entering it. I say this, because I feel quite sure that this house is being watched. If you had given the officer some false information regarding my whereabouts, I would not have been cornered, but would have had a better chance to escape, because his search for me would have then been devoted entirely to the place where you told him I would be, but as things are situated now, there is nothing else for me to do but remain where I am.

Mrs. B.—Oh, my dear, you can't do that. You will have to leave this place as quickly as possible. I have a foreboding of the detective's return to search this place for you. I would rather have you captured in an intrepid attempt to escape than in the cowardly act of hiding.

Mr. B.—If you were in my shoes, you would think a thousand times before you do that which you urge me so eagerly to do.

Mrs. B.—Can you with certainty say that if you were to attempt to escape you would be caught? There are two things that will confront you in your attempt to escape. They are, firstly, that you may be captured, and secondly that you may escape, whereas if you do not try to escape, only one thing confronts you in the dastardly act of hiding, which is that you may be caught. The police are determined to find you and they will eventually if you remain here. You are the murderer of Mr. Harper and you know it as well as I. The circumstances in the case are such that it is apparent to the public that you are the guilty one. There is no doubt in my mind that you cannot escape the indictment, and if indicted, you are sure to be convicted. You cannot escape it. You cannot.

Mr. B.—Do you really mean that I must leave this

house?

Mrs. B.—Yes.

Mr. B.—Then leave I must, but will I be able to endure the pain which thoughts will be conveying to me as my mind wanders in search of information regarding your welfare? Will I be able to become an exile from you? No. No.

Mrs. B.—All that is true, my dear, but you must save yourself. Say not that you would grieve to become an exile from me, for you do not mean it. Two months have not elapsed since you said that with you, "'Twas money first, and family afterwards.'" That you would even blight my happiness in struggling for pecuniary gain, if by doing so you could succeed. Is not your life more valuable to you than money? Answer me this simple question.

Mr. B.—Yes, but what is life to anyone if he or she be not comfortable in mind?

Mrs. B.—Ah, my dear, while there is life, there is hope. Time brings with it great changes. We may live happily together again ere we breathe our last.

Mr. B.—Happiness? I am not thinking of it. If I do, I will be wasting precious thoughts on an impossibility. The bloodstain of Harper which is on my hand is indelible. The thoughts of this crime are going to haunt me even in my grave. There is nothing in this world with which I can assist me in escaping castigation for it and especially remorse. I'd rather die than live the life which looks me full in the face and makes clear exposition of its unchanging nature. Each day of my existence will make my existence more miserable. Misery of life, misery of soul, misery of mind, what else is there left to suffer?

Mrs. B.—I can imagine what your feelings are. You do not have to tell me. Your very actions not long ago bespoke your eager desire to escape the penalty of the law, and that was why I urged you to escape, if possible. If you would rather die than live, then to escape is unnecessary, but I fail to see any sense in your way of reasoning.

Mr. B.—You do not understand me clearly.

Mrs. B.—Why? Did you not speak plainly?

Mr. B.—Yes.

Mrs. B.—Then, why do you think that I have misunderstood you?

Mr. B.—Because your comprehension of the matter is altogether different to what I mean. If I do not escape, the officers will eventually have me, I will be indicted and without doubt be convicted and consequently die an ignominious death. This kind of a death was not what I had reference to, for I do not wish to leave you disgraced, with the weight of shame bending low your head to the dust. I wish to die a death which will leave behind it a spotless record of my life's work, though truthfully it will be infamous. I am quite sure that the mark of guilt which my face carries would convict me were I facing any court of justice. I can hear now the judge reading my sentence of death. At such a thought I shiver, especially when I think of you left behind me and derided wherever you might go. My life is nothing to me now, for I can find no comfort in it. I think that suicide is my only refuge. It seems the only way out.

Mrs. B.—Why would you commit suicide?

Mr. B.—Only to shield your name.

Mrs. B.—You cannot shield my name by suicide. You would expose it shamefully.

Mr. B.—Apparently, you are very dull of comprehension. Can you not understand the situation of affairs?

Mrs. B.—I did that long ago, for I saw both sides, pro and con.

Mr. B.—And yet you fail to agree with me?

Mrs. B.—I fail to agree with you because you are thinking only of things here below and not of things above. Man can ridicule man and say all manner of things against man, but man cannot give man eternal bliss. Man's potency on earth is like that of a piece of paper which when being carried along by a gale, apparently has the power

to fly, a power which God gave it not, but the gale soon ceases and the paper finds itself helplessly falling down to the ground from whence it was taken. What care I about what man says about me! What care I about man's opinion of me if God be for me? What care I about what man does to me on earth, if I be sure that when my life is ended (and which I will be sure of if I repent in time) my soul will find its way to eternal repose.

Mr. B. (he smiles)—What do you know about eternal bliss? Do you think that there is a hereafter?

Mrs. B.—I am not in a position, nor is an human being in a position to aver that there is or is not a hereafter, but since it is being taught to us that there is one, we should, even if we be doubtful keep on the safe side of our skepticism. We are being taught day after day that if we do that which is right, our souls will be happy forever, and that if we do that which is wrong our souls will be in eternal misery. None of this can we with certainty doubt. Therefore the best thing for us to do is to labor for the better, the hereafter in which our souls will find the way to endless felicity. Fear not what man may conspire to do to you. Fear not the punishment which man may inflict upon you, for any crime which you commit, but fear God's wrath and anger. You can evade man's wrath and act of punishment, but you cannot escape God's. Think of this as long as you live and you will honor and adore your Maker and doing that, you will at the same time, keep all his commandments.

Mr. B. (rising suddenly)—Someone is at the door!

Mrs. B.—There, hide yourself. It may be an officer of the law.

Mr. B. retires.

Lawyer Hunt enters.

Lawyer Hunt—Oh, my dear Mrs. Brady. I am very glad to see you. Your presence, I assure you, fills my heart with joy.

Mrs. B.—Have you been in the city since I last saw

you?

Lawyer Hunt—No, I have been away on a vacation. I would have written you while I was away, but knowing that you were angry with me the last time we were together, I thought it best not to write.

Mrs. B.—Oh, my friend, you do not know how happy it would have made me if I had received a letter from you. One from you would have been consoling to me in my bereavement.

Lawyer Hunt—Bereavement? What do you mean by that? Are you, or were you in any trouble since I last saw you?

Mrs. B.—I have been in distress since and am now.

Lawyer Hunt—If there is anything that I can do to help you, I would very gladly do it.

Mrs. B.—Would you really?

Lawyer Hunt—I will, unhesitatingly. Tell me the cause of all of your grief and I will do all I can to free you from it.

Mrs. B.—Can I trust you? There are a few things that I shall have to mention which are confidential, therefore, I wish you to take an oath before me and your God that you will not divulge it to anyone.

Lawyer Hunt—I promise you by lifting my right hand in oath before God, and with my left hand upon my breast, that I will not reveal it.

Mrs. B.—Then listen. Things have happened just as I told you, not long ago, they might. Mr. Brady is being sought for now by the police. He is accused of murder.

Lawyer Hunt (with surprise)—Murder.

Mrs. B.—Yes, he is accused of the murder of a Mr. Harper, a millionaire. Of course the evidence against him is purely circumstantial, but at the same time, it is apparent that he is guilty.

Lawyer Hunt—Why is it apparent that he is guilty?

Mrs. B.—Because the millionaire was shot in Mr. Brady's office and the worst of it is that Mr. Brady hid

himself from the police and the public immediately after the murder.

Lawyer Hunt—What do you mean to say that he has become an exile from you?

Mrs. B.—No, he is here hiding.

Lawyer Hunt—Well, my dear, Mrs. Brady, the best thing for Mr. Brady to do is to make a getaway for it is the only chance he has to escape the chair. It is true that I am a lawyer, but it would be a waste of time for me to try to successfully defend him. The evidence against him is too strong, especially if his victim be the one who assisted him in business by lending him one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and in which business he afterwards became insolvent and consequently was unable to make good the loan at the time appointed and at which time the murder was done.

Mrs. B. (in surprise)—Why, I never thought you knew anything about Mr. Brady's having borrowed one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I thought his manager and I were the only people with the exception of Mr. Harper who knew anything about it. Who told you about it?

Lawyer Hunt—I overheard it in a club a few days ago.

Mrs. B.—Mr. Brady claims that there is no possible chance for him to escape. He alleges that this house is being watched and that if he were to attempt to escape he would be caught. This he does not desire to happen as it would mean nothing but disgrace to me. He also claims that he could not become an exile from me without grieving over it.

Lawyer Hunt—If I were you I would insist on his leaving here as quickly as possible. This is no time for him to think of how painful it would be to him to become an exile from you for his life is at stake. If he values not his life, how can he value anything else?

Mrs. B.—To tell you the truth, my dear friend, I

think Mr. Brady is out of his mind for he made a suggestion to me not long ago of an action that shocked me. I was so surprised that I almost said things I might have been sorry for afterwards. His suggestion was that he commit suicide and thus terminate the whole affair.

Lawyer Hunt—Oh that is to be expected. The poor fellow's thoughts are perpetually wandering day after day in search of something that might suffice for the amelioration of the condition in which he is, and therefore, he falls for anything that is impressively conveyed back to him, aye, anything that is suggestive of the termination of his troubles. Perhaps if I have a talk with him, I might succeed in convincing him of his folly and also of how wise it would be if he escapes.

Mrs. B.—May I have him appear before you?

Lawyer Hunt—Yes, I would be very grateful if you do, not that it would benefit me any to interview him, but because through that he might derive some benefit.

Mrs. B.—Then I will insist upon him having a talk with you. If you will excuse me for a few minutes, I will go to his room and bring him into your presence.

Lawyer Hunt—The pleasure is yours.

Mrs. B. retires.

Mr. and Mrs. B. enter.

Mrs. B. retires.

Lawyer Hunt to Mr. B.—Quite a few years have elapsed since I last saw you, eh? ..

Mr. B.—Fully four years, I think.

Lawyer Hunt—Well, generally speaking, how is everything?

Mr. B.—Ah, my friend, time has wrought great changes. A few years ago, if anyone had predicted what I am in now, I would not have credited it. After having struggled for several years up the hill of progress, I stood on its summit, not long ago, with glee, and viewed the prints which my weary feet left on time's way. I gazed with searching eyes and beside the prints, I saw here and

there little spots made by the sweat which fell from my brow, and still gazing on, I saw others, weary and tired, struggling up the steep way. Could I have helped them? Yes, but my heart was hardened. I was selfish. I enjoyed their picture not thinking that there might possibly come the time when I would awake in the morning and find myself down in the valley below. The morning which I never dreamt of came not long ago. I opened my eyes as usual with the expectation of gazing upon the sun of luxury shining brilliantly in my possession, but while I slept, a great change was wrought. I awoke and found myself in the firm grasp of destruction, nay indigence. The sun had lost its rays. Upon my life there was utter darkness. Everything seemed mysterious. I wondered at the great change for a little while. Possibilities came up vividly before me of my successfully ameliorating my condition if I with indomitable courage endeavored to do it. I tried every possible effort to free myself from the iron grip of destruction but the same effort was only the means of hastening the materialization of the project which fate has now wrought. I carry with me now the indelible stigma of murder. Ignominy looks me full in the face. I try to elude its gaze, but all in vain. I pray the past to return, but it answers, "I return not." I try to console myself with the hopes of a better future, but my conscience points out to me the impossibility. I cannot rest! My mind is troubled. Life—, is nothing to me. Oh how much better it would be if I could pass this very moment into eternity!

Lawyer Hunt—Be not discouraged, my friend, for inasmuch as you have committed a heinous crime there is yet time for forgiveness. If you take your own life, you will surely not be forgiven, for you will have no time to repent.

Mr. B.—Why do you think that I might take my life?

Lawyer Hunt—Did you not suggest it?

Mr. B.—Yes, but not to you. How did you come in-

to possession of the fact?

Lawyer Hunt—You would not profit by it if I told you. Think not of that, my friend. The thing for you to think of now is escaping. You are not the first murderer, nor will you be the last. If you remain here, you will soon close your eyes in death, having not the opportunity to redeem yourself, for "man seeketh your life to destroy it, whereas if you escape you will be out of the reach of their cruel hands; you will be spared to make good with your God the wrong you have done and consequently live a life less miserable.

Mr. B.—It is impossible for my life to become less miserable! As long as I remain alive and sane I will think of the deed I have done. Life is nothing to me—NOTHING.

Lawyer Hunt—My friend, my advice to you is to go away. The change may do you good. If you remain here, it will not be long before man's cruel hands deprive you of your life. You cannot say that you value not your life, for you do. You feel tired of life because you are looking only at the dark side of it. If you look at the bright side, my friend, you will realize that there are many good things in it for you. You will come into possession of the fact that for all sins, for all deeds, for all crimes, there is forgiveness. God has several ways in converting sinners. He does it sometimes through the taking of the lives of those who are prepared to meet him. This is probably his way in converting you, for thou art completely changed now. Be not discouraged. God will take care of you.

Mr. B.—Would God take care of as vile a sinner as I was?

Lawyer Hunt—Ah, my friend, I am glad you used the word "was," for God deals not with persons according to what they were, he deals with them according to what they are.

Mr. B.—Then, why should I escape? Cannot God take

care of me here as well as he would if I became an exile from my only friend, my wife? If all you have said be true, I refuse to leave this place for God's power is greater than man's. If I escape, it would be because my trust is not in God, but in man. I fear no man living! Go bring police officers, bring detectives, and see if I'd blench.

Mrs. B. enters.

Mrs. B.—Oh, pardon me. Have I interrupted you?

Lawyer Hunt—I am glad you have for I was just about leaving.

Lawyer Hunt retires.

Mrs. B.—Well, are you convinced now that you must escape?

Mr. B.—No, I refuse to stoop so low. Like a man I shall face my destiny. I willfully murdered Harper. Whatever the consequence is, I am willing to suffer it. Ere my friend, Lawyer Hunt, interviewed me, my mind was morbid. Now it is clean, pure and healthful.

Mrs. B.—Someone is at the door.

Detective and two Police Officers enter.

Detective to Mr. B.—Ah, scoundrel, when did you gain entrance to this city? Were you in this house since your cruel hands took Harper's life? For days I have sought you. Now that I have found you, come with me.

Mr. B. (he laughs.)

Mrs. B. (distracted).

Mr. B. (to Detective)—You cannot intimidate me.

Detective—Scoundrel, bid your wife farewell. You are arrested.

Mr. B., Detective and Police Officers retiring.

Mrs. B. (frantically)—Oh, please do not take him now, I entreat you.

CURTAIN.

THE END.



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